

"LIFE OF MAN" IS FULL OF WOE

Eloquent but Gloomy Play
from Russian Given as
a Treat

WASHINGTON SQUARE PLAYERS DO WELL

Drama by Andreyeff
Proves More Obstetrical
than Is Usual

By HEWOOD BROUN

Leonid Andreyeff's ideal, we are told, is the theatre of truth. He desires to sweep away the pleasant pretence which grips drama. In other words, he would oppose "Come Out of the Kitchen" with "Get Into the Cellar." In fact he has, although the play happens to be called "The Life of Man." It was produced at the Comedy Theatre last night for the subscribers of the Washington Square Players.

The dramatic skill of Andreyeff is great and his eloquence marvellous, but he suffers from the characteristic Russian failing of loving misery more than wisely. When a character announces "I shall turn inside out in a moment and be red" we must confess that is being disturbed. We were glad that he didn't.

If it is good that false ideals and false optimism shall be shattered, we would not choose Andreyeff as the spokesman of the movement. He throws away his case. Were life the horror he pictures, out of decency everybody would have to die. In justice to Andreyeff it must be pointed out that his pessimism is sincere. His aphorism informs us that in early life he made three attempts to kill himself. Satisfied that his suicidal technique was imperfect, he turned to drama. Here he does masterly work in spite of an unsound theory.

It is Andreyeff's idea that action, in the accepted sense of movements and visible achievements on the stage, is not necessary to the theatre. The most tragic aspects of life, he finds, are deep in the recesses of the soul. In theorizing on the theatre he has contrasted Benvenuto Cellini and Friedrich Nietzsche and has decided that the German was a much more romantic figure, despite the fact that his life was infinitely poorer than the Italian's in physical activity and adventure. Andreyeff wishes to present the drama of spiritual and intellectual conflict and so he has chosen symbolism as his method of expression. He does not realize that this offers no escape from the stern necessity of action imposed by the stage. It is not enough to interest an audience in Everyman but in every man.

Any one who has traced the progress of the English drama knows that it could not be confined to the abstractions of the early moralities. The figures grow more concrete and more complete all the time until we find Good-Deeds and Fellowship and Inception and the rest of them are merely queer aliases for definite everyday folk. Nor is this tendency limited to drama. Nobody cares what Cribbin or Apollyon typified in "Pilgrim's Progress." They lived because they stood toe to toe and slugged themselves into the fame which comes to all good fighters, be they called Christian, Apollyon, Porthos, Bridger Gerard or what you will. The famous battle in Havana would have gained no added interest if Jess Willard had been placarded as Light and Jack Johnson as Dickens.

It is with the abstractions of Andreyeff. Long before the play is over we know that Man is not all men, but a definite and well characterized individual. Only the Being in Grey remains an abstraction.

The Russian is a humorist, but he uses laughter, not to relieve, but to heighten horror. In the first act in which Man is born it is the laughter of the old women rather than the cries of the mother which pile the agony on to the breaking point. Religion is the factor which lifts the play now and again out of the muckiness. Man fights fate, and the most dramatic incidents in the play are those in which he defies the Being in Grey.

It is easy to tell the story of the plot for this may be done by means of part of the prologue, as follows:

"Look and listen, ye who have come hither for mirth and laughter. Lo, there will pass before you all the life of Man, with its dark beginning and its dark end. Hitherto non-existent, mysteriously hidden in infinite time, without thought or feeling, utterly unknown, he will mysteriously break through the barriers of non-existence and with a cry will announce the beginning of his brief life. In the night of non-existence will blaze up a candle, lighted by an unseen hand. This is the life of Man. Behold his flame. It is

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After birth, he will take on the image and the name of man, and in all respects he will be like other people who already live on the earth, and their cruel fate will be his fate, and his cruel fate will be the fate of all people. Irresistibly dragged on by time, he will tread inevitably all the steps of human life, upward to its climax and downward to its end. Limited in vision, he will not see the step to which his upward road is already raised him. Choy Dow, Milbank and May Fook.

"The amounts are different," said Dr. Parks, "but the association and the unanimity are the same. I think there was never before made possible such a list in the history of any church."

NO N. J. RULER FOR HALF DAY

Twelve Hours Between Fielder's Retirement and Edge's Inauguration

Trenton, N. J., Jan. 14.—New Jersey will be without a Governor for twelve hours on Tuesday, since the term of Governor Fielder will end at midnight Monday and Governor-elect Edge will not take the oath of office until Tuesday noon.

The Washington Square Players in their production last night used the variant for the last act which the author prepared to meet certain objections by the critics. On this occasion, therefore, the hero died without the background of alcohol horrors. In the variant Andreyeff made certain concessions, but most of them were cynical. He explained, for instance, "Man" was absent from my play, and this also seemed to many unjust. In the present version it is represented in the character of the Sister of Mercy, and although during the whole act she does not open her eyes once, yet her very presence bears witness to the fact that "man" really exists."

In view of the fact that "The Life of Man" presents enormous difficulties to actors and producer, it must be said that last night's performance at the Comedy Theatre was commendable. Reservation should be made because the players by no means put all the

Diet Pilot, Professor of Soup, English Alma Mater, Seeks Job

Expert Who Mixes Rookies' Calories Can Preach a Bit, Is Master of "Consume," but Is Willing to Do Commercial Cooking

H. Vesey Parsons, G. S., graduate of the Blackpool (England) Culinary College, globe trotter and raconteur extraordinary, is moderately anxious to hear from any one who will be in the market two or three weeks from now for a chef, courier, interpreter, companion, lecturer with own slides, private dietitian or spiritual adviser.

By any qualified and interested person Mr. Parsons, who at present is bound by a short time contract with the new Calorie Club, of which Police Commissioner Wood is honorary president, may be reached through the Commissioner.

Certain publicity accruing to the club has recently come to the attention of Mr. Parsons. Noting with concern that references to himself were mostly of a light or frivolous character, he decided yesterday to avail himself of the news prints to send a serious message to the world. That is, that when the Calorie Club disbands two weeks from-morrow on H. Vesey Parsons will find himself dependent for sustenance on a batch of valuable but inedible advertising.

He Ponders Over Chowder

It was a melancholy Mr. Parsons who stirred the Calorie Club's Sunday evening corn chowder, wrapped in a chocolate gloom that matched his own sombre dermal coloring.

"Reckon," he mused, "it's about time I was thinkin' where I was goin' from here."

Further overheard reflections indicated that Mr. Parsons, who has occupied the chair of practical demonstration in Columbia's dietetics department for the last year, has come to the realization that science rewards her own chiefly in the coin of self-satisfaction.

"Us educators," he continued, "get used to havin' our three months' vacation every summer, and we look forward with the so-called Sabbath year, wherein every day is Sunday. But I

enormous kick into the performance which the manuscript makes possible.

For instance, as excellents an actor as Jose Ruben was not good enough to exhaust the possibilities of Mansfield.

He gave good moments in his interpretation, but acted telling points his performance became inadequate. In his simulation of rage he grew incoherent in carrying the Being in Grey in the fourth act, and at the end of the play he departed absolutely from the directions of the author. Of course, an actor has a right to slight the advice of an author, but not unless he can improve upon his suggestions. Ruben did not choose to give the final curse in the whisper throughout, while Andreyeff directs, "With each succeeding little note the voice becomes more youthful and stronger." Andreyeff wishes to present the drama of spiritual and intellectual conflict and so he has chosen symbolism as his method of expression. He does not realize that this offers no escape from the stern necessity of action imposed by the stage. It is not enough to interest an audience in Everyman but in every man.

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DICKENS STORY SEEN ON SCREEN

"Great Expectations" at Strand Is Pleasing Photoplay

ETHEL BARRYMORE IN RIALTO FEATURE

Academy of Music Has
Virginia Pearson in
"Bitter Truth"

done had my fill of teachin' the young idea to cook. I just didn't get around this winter to sign up for another year on the faculty.

"You see, I've been workin' around

education most of my life. I got my own groundsway at the Blackpool Culinary College—'spose you heard of that?"

The audience hadn't.

"It's in England," explained Mr. Parsons. "They teachin' how to cook French and German and Egyptian and

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